

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2037

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Education

**Title:** An act relating to academic achievement for recent immigrant students.

**Brief Description:** Regarding academic achievement for immigrant students.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Upthegrove, Santos, Kenney, Hudgins, B. Sullivan, McCoy, Roberts and Hasegawa.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 2/21/05, 2/24/05 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Creates a pilot program for recent immigrant students who are seniors and need additional English language and academic instruction to meet high school graduation requirements.
- Creates a joint select committee to develop strategies and recommendations that improve educational opportunities for recent immigrant students with limited English proficiency.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Santos, Shabro and Tom.

**Staff:** Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

**Background:**

Beginning with the class of 2008, most public high school students, including recent immigrants, must pass the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in reading, writing, and mathematics in order to graduate. During the 2003-04 school year, about 17 percent of the immigrant high school students with limited English skills who took the WASL met the state standards in reading and writing and about 10 percent met them in mathematics.

The legislation that included the WASL graduation requirement, 3ESHB 2195, also directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to design a program for recent immigrant students who are old enough to graduate but lack the English language skills necessary to pass the WASL. The two agencies proposed a two phase pilot program for immigrant students who are seniors. Immigrant students in the pilot would be given intensive English language and college preparation instruction. They would also be given an opportunity to take college courses. Funding for students in the pilots would be based on the funding model for the Running Start Program. The proposal was provided to the legislative education committees in September, 2004.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The OSPI and the SBCTC will develop options for recent immigrant high school students who have taken the high school WASL but who have not obtained a Certificate of Academic Achievement or met other state and district graduation requirements. The agencies will pilot one approach in at least two school districts and two community or technical colleges. The pilots will be dispersed geographically and one will be offered to students with diverse first languages. The other will be offered to students with a common first language. In December, 2007, the two agencies will report to the Legislature on the pilots and other options. The agencies will implement the options beginning in the 2008-09 school year.

### **Joint Select Committee on Immigrant Education**

The Joint Select Committee on Immigrant Education is created. The committee will have four legislators, of whom two will be from the Senate and two will be from the House of Representatives. The legislators will be selected from each major legislative caucus. The Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) may each appoint a representative to join the committee. The members of the committee will be appointed within 14 days after the act becomes law.

The committee will develop strategies and recommendations designed to improve educational opportunities and attainment for recent immigrant students for whom English is a second language. It will seek advice from an advisory committee that will analyze and make recommendations on a variety of issues. The subcommittee will explore international distance learning, international high school degree programs, and strategies to increase the number of teachers who are prepared to teach students for whom English is a second language. The subcommittee will also address strategies to increase the cultural competence of school employees through consultation and involvement of community-based organizations. It will recommend ways to infuse cultural awareness and understanding into educator and administrator preparation programs and other strategies to improve educational opportunities and attainment for recent immigrant students. The advisory committee will include representatives of a number of state agencies and administrators and teachers who provide services to recent immigrant students.

By December 15, 2005, it will report its findings and recommendations to a group that includes the Governor, the SPI, members of the legislative fiscal and education committees, and education agencies. The committee will receive staffing support from legislative staff and the OSPI. Legislators will receive per diem and travel funds. Members of the advisory committee will receive any per diem and travel from the school district, organization, or agency that the members represent.

The committee and its duties expire on April 1, 2006.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The pilot program is scaled down to two school districts, juniors as well as seniors may participate, and no scholarship is involved. The SPI may appoint a representative to the joint select committee. The committee will, rather than may, have an advisory committee. The advisory committee will explore and report on many of the issues that were the responsibility of the joint select committee. The OSPI will help staff the joint select committee and advisory committee. Appointments to the joint select committee will occur within 14 days of the effective date of the act rather than by April 22, 2005.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Testimony For:** (Original bill) Under education reform, the state's academic standards were intended to remain constant, and the amount of time that students take to achieve the standards was intended to vary. Many recent immigrant students don't have the English language skills necessary to demonstrate achievement of the state standards. Although they can remain in high school until age 21, a community college campus may well be a more appropriate educational setting for them once they reach age 18 or so. This legislation pilots an approach that allows recent immigrant students to take a program that combines intensive English language instruction, college preparation, and perhaps community college course work. It is a sound approach since language fluency is best acquired in the context of academic subjects.

The joint select committee is a good idea since there is an urgent need for teachers and administrators to become culturally competent.

(Concerns on original bill): Concerns were expressed about the funding source for the \$1,000 scholarship, the required individual learning plans, the requirement that participants be high school seniors who lack only successful completion of the WASL to graduate, and the lack of translated versions of the WASL.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support of original bill) Representative Upthegrove, prime sponsor; Ricardo Sanchez, Latino Educational Achievement Project; Robert Butts and Richard Gomez, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Don Rash, Association of Washington School Principals; and Brian Kanen, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

(Concerns on original bill) Gary King, Washington Education Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.